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THE PNEU SCHOOL TEACHER'S HANDBOOK FORMS I & II

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THE PARENT AS TEACHER

The Importance of the Home

Parents who assume responsibility for the education of their own children may be comforted to learn that teachers in Primary Schools today are convinced that children must continue to learn at school in the same way as they did at home during the early years: that is, through their own activities, with the guidance and help of an adult. Evidence agrees that the home, particularly in the early years of a child's life, has a far greater influence on his development than the school does. The most important advantage of a good home background is that it gives affection, sympathy and understanding, routine and consistency; the child feels secure and develops naturally through his various stages of mental and physical growth because his parents are aware of his widening interests and curiosity and are prepared to cater for them.

True learning comes about through Action and Experience. A jingle helps us to realise this:-

"I have five senses you must reach
If I'm to learn and you to teach,
With touch, taste, smell and eyes so clear
Why must I learn all things by ear?"

It is necessary too, when thinking of education, to realise that it means the education of the whole child. Those who teach must be aware that they are endeavouring to help the young child to attain optimum development - emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically and that all these things are inter-dependent - a "seamless robe of learning".

All parents will have added to their intuitive knowledge of how to bring up a family by learning from their own experience, by observation of others, by reading books and articles and by taking advice. They will usually settle down to a pattern of behaviour as a family characteristic of their own generation.

Parents will be interested not only to watch and enjoy their child's development but wish to help him by physical care such as exercise, nutritious food, adequate sleep, sensible clothing and medical attention when necessary, by intellectual stimulation through speech, travel, books,

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pictures, television, religious observance and by emotional nourishment.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Much study of children's developmental stages has taken place and it is generally accepted that learning should be related to the stage reached by a child. A change from one well-developed stage occurs at about 4, another at 7 and again at 10 or 11. Thus, it is pointless to teach until a child can take in what is being taught, but a child will learn when a topic or relationship is within his grasp. This doctrine can be misinterpreted and made an excuse for not causing a child to make effort but in reality these two things are quite separate.

Another thing to bear in mind is that learning does not go on at a steady, regular rate but by what are called plateaux of learning. A child will apparently fail to make progress and then suddenly master a stage, ready to move on to the next.

INTELLIGENCE

The part which intelligence plays in learning has become a matter of controversy in recent years. It is established that by the age of four, we have already more than half our full potential intelligence and it remains valid that inborn intelligence or reasoning power is far greater than environmental influences, which however often determine what a person will make of his innate qualities. A teacher will of course find that the progress of a bright child is more rapid than that of other children. But this has nothing to do with ultimate achievement, success in life or with what sort of person we are.

LANGUAGE

One of the fundamental findings of recent years is the importance of language in a child's mental growth. It is accepted that children from homes where talk is encouraged from a child's earliest days, where parents converse with each other and with their family in complete sentences and use a wide vocabulary, have an enormous initial advantage over children from homes where monosyllables are the general

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rule and where reproof often takes the place of encouragement. The use of language not only assists intellectual growth but in the form of intonation leads a child to form attitudes based on its parents' manner.

PERSONALITY

All children have a unique combination of personality traits. Nowadays we are less dogmatic about correcting 'weaker' qualities since there is room for the gentle-natured child as well as for his more forceful brother or sister. Of course, these qualities are not constant and the teacher must take account of a child's good and bad moods and his 'on' and 'off' days.

PRAISE AND BLAME

The part which praise and blame play in teaching is vital. A child should always be complimented on achievement, if only of the simplest kind - "Good" should always be on a teacher's lips. But reprimand or correction should be applied obliquely and put in the form of encouragement, never harshly or sarcastically. To say it is essential to let a child learn for itself is not to condemn a teacher to a passive role. A teacher's skill lies in knowing how a child learns and in using that knowledge to help an individual to grow in wisdom and understanding.

There are many other aspects of teaching. With younger children, it is essential to grasp the significance of play.

PLAY

Play is an essential factor in physical, mental and moral growth. Children play to be active, to explore life, to learn how to manipulate materials, to add to their own skills, to develop and express their own ideas and feelings and to adjust themselves to others and to the rules of social living. In the Plowden Report on "Children and their Primary Schools", we read that "Through play children gain synthesis, perception, analysis, relationship, concentration, expression, formulation, realisation, imagination, discrimination, sensitivity and judgment". Associated with play is the widening of experience - talking to a child, taking him on visits, answering his countless questions, reading stories and poems, letting him meet people, young and old. Many PNEU families

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are well-placed for out-of-the ordinary experience of life. The stimulation of curiosity, the possession of a wider vocabulary and general knowledge lay a sound foundation for reading.

In some part of the house or garden shed there should be room for a 'discovery' table where a child may display unusual objects or nature specimens that he has found on his walks and outings and experiments in growing things should have a place in his activities. Curiosity and discovery usually lead to wonder and wonder is the beginning of worship. It is necessary to see that the child is involved in doing things which attract him and to be alive to every situation that will encourage interest in learning the necessary skills.

HOME TEACHING

The importance of human relationships colours all the work attempted - a child who learns well is a happy child and a happy child usually learns well. Those who tutor him must have patience, honesty, sensitivity and a sense of humour. The parent who comes fresh to teaching as opposed to "mothering" a child may be overwhelmed at the thought of what is called for. In practice a sensible and interested parent, either father or mother, can almost be guaranteed success in the teaching of their family if they can give the necessary time. They have the initial advantage of a close relationship with the child and enjoy the child's trust. From here it is a short step to explain to the child that one, or both, of them will be its teacher or teachers.

By study of this Handbook and the accompanying year's Programme, by careful perusal of the books required and by the preparation of work and lessons, the parent will emerge as a teacher. Inside the "classroom", a special room or portion of a room set aside as the child's school, there will be a subtle change in parental relationships. Children will quickly learn that here the parent has another role to play which is to combine the accustomed parental one with that of the somewhat more detached teacher who will assist the child to learn and actually learn alongside him.

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It will not be long before both teacher and child have adapted themselves to the new situation. Novelty will usually ensure that a keen start is made and interest should ensure that progress is maintained. Most children wish to learn and parents find it very satisfying to be teacher to their own children. They will find that it takes up time to prepare work and often renew old learning. Nowadays they will be called upon to teach processes and methods which did not exist until a few years ago, especially in subjects like mathematics. But PNEU puts great store on the release of latent talent, particularly in mothers.

Our experience is that mothers with only one or two children to teach achieve better results than a child in a school, although mothers with larger families may find the organisation of work for children of different ages a more difficult proposition. In short, a mother and child will reinforce each other's enthusiasm and gain mutual confidence. If father can assist regularly with one or two subjects, this will relieve mother and permit the child to see that father is equally concerned with his son's or daughter's education. Teachers in ordinary schools require reserves of confidence to face their large classes. Parents at home will need to acquire confidence, but the PNEU system virtually assures them of success if they are prepared to make the effort of carrying out the advice set out in this Handbook.

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

1. The PNEU School year is made up of three terms of twelve weeks' duration.
2. It is an advantage for children to be able to keep all their books and equipment together in a place where they will get into the habit of settling down to work at once. Therefore, if at all possible, a room should be set aside as the schoolroom. Should this be impracticable, a corner of a room might be turned into a small classroom. Here pupils could have a bookcase, a cupboard or shelves in which to keep their lesson books and there should be a sheet of soft-board or something similar, where pictures can be displayed.

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3. Parents should prepare lessons carefully and provide any available background material before work begins. An accurate record of work should be kept with daily entries of the stage reached; an ordinary exercise book is sufficient for keeping this record.

4. The time-table for each form is a guide to the length and arrangement of lessons. If, perhaps because children in different forms are working in the same room, it is impossible to follow the time-table exactly, the suggested balance and variety should be maintained. A lesson in which much concentration is required should be followed by an easier one. Overseas members may modify the time-table to suit climatic conditions. Once established the time-table should be pursued with regularity.

5. The programmes indicate the amount of work to be covered in each subject. The pages specified for a term's work should be carefully noted. To find the approximate number of pages to be covered each week, divide the total number of pages set for the term by the number of weeks in your term. You will find it necessary as the days and weeks pass to amend this mechanical approach in the light of the pupil's response.

NARRATION

Narration is a teaching technique developed by Charlotte Mason to train a child in the habit of attentive reading and rapid comprehension. It is simply an oral repetition in the child's own words of what has been read by the child or, with younger children, read aloud to them. Throughout Form I all books used in narration lessons are read aloud to the pupil by the parent or teacher, unless the child is exceptionally advanced. In Form II this reading aloud can continue for the more difficult books, such as those used in Literature lessons.

The narration method

We recommend the following method to obtain the best results from narration. First read a passage (or have it read) once. Then, narrate what has been read immediately.

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A single reading is insisted on because a pupil who knows there will be another opportunity to hear something is not going to pay full attention the first time. The immediate retelling fixes the material in the pupil's memory.

Narration lessons must not be allowed to drag. It is the substance of what is read that is to be narrated, not all the trivial details, so the passage read must be long enough to allow of narration. With the six-year-olds a whole fable or fairy tale will be read before the child is asked to narrate. When books are long enough to last for a term or longer the passages chosen for narration must have coherence and plenty of material for the retelling.

Ways of narrating

Oral narration is used throughout IB and for the first two terms in Lower IA. At first a child may get things out of order, may perhaps start in the middle and then, remembering what happened earlier, go back to the beginning. If this happens it need not be corrected. The child should be allowed to tell things in his own way and need not necessarily follow the adult sequence of thought.

A child who is very shy and finds great difficulty with oral narration might be helped by drawing a picture to illustrate the story or incident and then explaining it but this should be only a short-time solution. If praise is given wherever possible for the spoken narration, there should be a gradual growth in confidence.

Form of narration lesson

1. If the readings are part of one long book there will be a very brief recapitulation of the last lesson in the form of an answer to a question like: "How far did we get last time?"

2. Teach any new names of people and places or other difficult key words before beginning the reading so that there will be no need to break off to give explanation and so disturb the child's concentration. Any difficult names should be written up somewhere where they can be seen during the reading.

3. Read, without interruption, the story or passage chosen for the lesson.

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4. Ask for the narration and do not interrupt it. If it is clear that something has been omitted or misunderstood this should be corrected at the end by saying something like: "Yes, and then...?" or "Are you sure that was what happened?" In this way the child is encouraged to set the mistake right for himself.

In Form I the oral narrations tend to be long. They may have a strong flavour of the original and whole sentences may be the same because some of the words or phrases in the reading will be to the child's taste and his mind will retain these.

In Form II a child should be sorting out what is important from what is merely of interest and will begin to have views on the people or events concerned. These need not be directly expressed but they will probably colour the oral or written accounts.

Occasionally, children may reject or tire of narration. The teacher should act appropriately.

C U R R I C U L U M S U B J E C T S

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

The PNEU Home School was founded on sound learning and the Christian religion. Most of the families enrolled still find its emphasis on Bible readings of essential value but we recognise that parents with different religious beliefs or views may wish to omit this subject, or present it in a different way.

The Bible text, not some simplified version, is used from the beginning though in IB it may be necessary to summarise the story before the Bible words are read.

Unless a parent is very familiar with the Authorised Version of the Bible it is advisable to use one of the modern translations suggested on the programmes.

The aim of the Bible lessons is that the pupil gets to know the biblical books chosen. It is not necessary for these to be studied in any way at this stage. The recommended reference books are for the use of the parent or teacher. Good pictures are useful, e.g. photographs of the places mentioned or pictures of objects that may be unfamiliar such as yokes and wineskins.

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Pictures of Christ should be restricted to those that remember who it is they are trying to portray. Sentimental over-sweet pictures do nothing but harm and many people spend years in adult life trying to rid themselves of an image of God they formed in childhood.

This does not mean that children should be deprived of the joy of making a Christmas Crib and learning to love the carols telling of the first Christmas. They should certainly have this experience but they should also know that the Child Jesus grew up to be a man who could stand hardship, go nights without sleep when he saw the need and clear the dealers out of the Temple by the force of his arm and the power of his personality. They should also know that he died for us - not by accident or because of a conspiracy but because he chose to. Calvary will not frighten a child as long as the new joy of Easter follows on from it.

Lessons will follow the general plan for a narration lesson.

ENGLISH

1. Reading

The Programme for Form IB children deals fully with the process of learning to read. Even now after the publication of the Bullock Report on Reading, there is no clear explanation of the complete process by which children come to learn to read. Each child will have its own pace and the teacher must find out what that pace is. A good reading scheme is the best approach and the vast majority of children will gradually gain mastery of the written word and later comprehension of what they can read. 'Reading readiness' is an over-used term as is the newer one 'dyslexia'. The latter simply means that a child has difficulty in learning to read. To find out what causes that difficulty is often extremely complex and an expert may have to be consulted if a child fails to make progress over a period.

Advice on supplementary books should be obtained from the Tutor if a child has had some setback in the learning process and extra help is needed or if his reading ability is very high.

Form I

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For IB work with the Happy Venture reading scheme see the programme.

Reading practice will continue throughout Lower and Upper IA. Assuming that the Happy Venture scheme has been completed by the age of 7, the Dragon Pirate and Griffin Pirate stories are recommended to extend vocabulary and build up confidence in the ability to read.

These books are not essential. For example, they will not be needed (though they would probably be enjoyed) by a child who is able to read, without help, the Puffin books and others recommended for leisure reading. What is essential is practice in reading aloud with accuracy and understanding.

There is no need for these stories to be narrated. They are used for the purpose of acquiring facility in reading. They have been chosen because they are well written and illustrated and they read aloud well.

Form II

By this time fluency in reading should have been achieved but there must still be practice in reading aloud with clear, correct enunciation and vocal expression suited to the mood of the poem or prose passage being read. Any of the programme books, or those given for leisure reading, could be used.

No special period will be set aside for reading aloud but it can be part of the narration lessons. To be able to read aloud well is a very valuable skill and time should be taken to acquire it.

2. Writing

Posture

The writing position should be well-balanced and relaxed. It can be said that good writing begins with the feet because placing the feet straight and, if possible, flat on the floor, influences the whole posture.

The following points should be watched:-

- The child should sit up well; a tendency to lean too far forward must be corrected at once and if it persists the child's sight should be tested.

- The pencil or crayon must be held lightly. If there is a tendency to grip it and press hard with the index (first) finger there should be some practice using only the thumb and second finger. Then when the index finger is made use of again it is seen to be necessary only for balance.
- The pencil must not rest in the 'valley' between the thumb and the index finger; it should be in a more upright position.
- The forearms should be supported by the writing table with elbows held slightly away from the body so that there is ease of movement.
- Writing is a free movement of the whole hand and arm not just a movement of the fingers while the arm is kept rigid.
- As the writing or pattern progresses down the paper it is the book or sheet of paper that moves up and not the child's position that alters.

Materials and method

Lessons should always be short - never longer than 10 minutes.

IB

Writing practice takes the form of copying letters and words from the book or from the blackboard. A child who is having great difficulty in forming letters might be helped by tracing them but this should be only a short-time aid as it does not help the child to form the letter in his own way. No attempt is to be made to ink letters up; it will be enough of an effort to produce letters copied carefully from the model.

Soft lead pencils (2B) or coloured pencils should be used. Paper with lines printed on it may be used if these are not too close together. Alternatively the parent or teacher may draw single guide lines on plain paper. Care should be taken to see that the child understands the position of letters like h, f, g and p on the guide line.

The size of the letters will be roughly that in Book 2 of Everyday Writing.

Pattern-making will make use of the child's sense of rhythm so that later when he progresses to linked script it will be easier for this to be fluent and even. Wax crayons

chalks, pastels, charcoal and felt pens may be used for pattern work. While making a pattern a child might say aloud a suitable rhyme or repeated phrase to help keep the rhythm.

Sizes of patterns may vary from those in the copybook and others may be invented.

The results achieved in writing practice will never be perfect; to expect this is unreasonable. At this stage it is sufficient to be aiming at well-formed letters and fluent patterns. The important thing is to make sure that letters begin in the right place, for example, in forming the letter 'd' the stroke should not be written first and in forming the letter 'o' the movement of the pencil should be anti-clockwise not clockwise.

Lower IA

Book 3 of Everyday Writing is used to introduce linked script. Soft lead pencils continue to be used; coloured pencils may be preferred for pattern work.

Pattern work is used to introduce and practice the various types of join and should not be omitted.

It is important that enough practice is done as each new join is learned and this may mean that a line in the book needs to be copied three or four times.

Very short dictations might be given to check that the pupil remembers the correct method of joining the various letters.

Upper IA

Writing in ink will begin in this class but it must be deferred until the pupil is using linked script with ease and confidence. Further practice may be needed with Book 3 of Everyday Writing and this can be supplemented by copying passages provided by the teacher.

When writing in ink begins it must be stressed that this is confined to the writing lessons. Before writing in ink is done in other lessons it must be possible for the pupil to produce neat work with his pen. Until this is achieved he should continue to work with a pencil.

When the use of ink is beginning the pupil should read for himself the introduction to Book 4 of Everyday Writing and hold his pen in the correct way, according to whether he is right or lefthanded.

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As this style of writing needs an italic nib the child should be equipped with this before beginning the book. Italic nibs may be obtained for ordinary dip-pens and there are also italic nib units which can be attached to fountain pens.

The book seems to expect that patterns will be done in different coloured inks but this will probably be unnecessary. If a fountain pen is being used it would be unsatisfactory to use various inks. If a child is eager to use different inks, and these are easily obtainable, a dip-pen should be used, at least for the patterns.

Left-handed children

A child who is decidedly left-handed must not be expected to change over to using the right hand. The notes about posture all apply but some points need to be made:

- The arm is moving towards the body instead of away from it with a consequent tendency to cramp and tiredness. To combat this see that the page or sheet of paper is slightly to the left of centre on the table so that there is plenty of room for the arm to move towards the body.
- The writing hand sometimes covers the work already done and causes smudging. To avoid this the pencil or crayon should be held 1-1½ inches from the point and not allowed to fall back into the 'valley' between the thumb and the first finger.
- There is a tendency to more tension in writing than with right-handed children. This leads to too strong a grip on the writing instrument; for dealing with this see the second point in the section on posture and make use of plenty of pattern work.
- Special nibs are made for left-handed writers using the italic style of writing. Parents whose children are left-handed should see that they are equipped with the correct nibs before beginning any work with ink.

3. English Language

Spoken language must be given equal rights with the written word in this subject. Over-emphasis on written expression can produce the kind of adult who is able to set down his thoughts on paper but totally lacking in the ability to express these thoughts in conversation or to give clear

directions.

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In IB most children will not need any special work in this subject as they will be using the workbooks of the Happy Venture reading scheme. If some work is done from Book 1 of Exploration English it will be done orally. Practice in expressing themselves in words is what is needed by pupils at this stage. There is no need for the words to be written but, if they are, they will be written at the pupil's dictation by the parent or teacher.

From Lower IA onwards, oral and written work will both play a part in language practice. When preparing the lessons the parent or teacher will decide which will be the most suitable sections to deal with orally and which could profitably be recorded in the book for written work.

Spelling is an important part of language. Fluency in reading and the ability to spell well often go together but this does not always happen, especially if a child has learned to read unusually early and the brain has become used to seeing words as symbols rather than things existing in their own right.

Bad spelling, that is persistent bad spelling, should not be ignored. Lack of accuracy is never something to be passed over as unimportant.

Dictation may be practised from IB onwards. Even the child who is having no real difficulty with spelling will benefit from writing down words that he hears; training in any form of communication is worthwhile. Dictations in IB will be extremely short - a matter of a few single words or one or two phrases - but the mental discipline involved in reproducing these without any model to refer to is valuable.

In Lower IA dictated short sentences can be attempted but work is still basically mental. That is to say there should never be so much writing involved that the muscular effort becomes the chief demand on the child. It is sometimes forgotten that the act of writing is a real strain until the hand and arm learn the trick of the business.

In Upper IA there can be short, prepared dictations in prose or verse, if the child is ready for these. This will be a matter for the parent to decide; if the skill in writing is not yet adequate they should not be attempted until the third term in the form or perhaps not attempted at all.

For a prepared dictation a verse of a poem or a short prose extract is chosen, sometimes by the child but more

often by the parent. (This may sound autocratic but it is not a good thing to be forever asking young children to make decisions; there are few things more tiring and they have rarely learned to discriminate between decisions that matter and those that can be taken lightly).

The child may look at the chosen section for as long as he likes but he should not make any written notes. He visualises the words he is unsure of, that is he closes his eyes and tries to 'see' the word, then opening his eyes he checks the correctness of his mental image. This is a useful method because visual memory, in some degree or other, seems commoner than aural memory.

When the child feels he is ready he says so and closes the book. Then the dictation is given, phrase by phrase, with each phrase read out once only. When the dictation is finished it will be checked against the original passage and those words that are found to be wrongly spelled are again visualised with their correct spelling.

One dictation each week is sufficient and for the child whose spelling is no problem they can be rarer. As a pupil progresses up the School the amount to be prepared can increase but the written portion should never be allowed to become excessive.

4. Creative Writing

Creative writing is produced when a child's imagination has been stimulated. The books recommended will help to do this but there is no need to keep exclusively to them. Good pictures and photographs might be used. Music, stories, films and poetry can all be means of stimulating the imagination.

The parent or teacher who feels confidence with this kind of work can begin it in IB, where the creative 'writing' will be oral. It can be spoken as it occurs to the child, or it can be taken down at the child's dictation as a narration would be.

Some suggestions for topics:

- looking at a stream, listening to it, letting the water run over the hands then saying what it might feel like to be a fish

- going for a run, as fast as possible; saying what it was like and what was seen and heard
- finding a shell, a piece of seaweed, a stone, a flower, a twig or something else that takes the fancy; saying how it looks and feels and smells
- imagining oneself a spaceman exploring a strange planet
- telling about the look and feel and smell of a bonfire
- saying what it feels like to go under a cold shower or dive under water
- imagining oneself a bird flying very high, or getting food
- looking at some well-known place by moonlight or by street lighting and describing it
- running through dry leaves or walking through snow
- blowing soap bubbles and telling about it
- watching heavy rain falling on leaves or on very dry ground
- watching light split by a prism into its colours
- telling about travelling at speed, perhaps on a cycle going downhill

"Close your eyes and remember or imagine" can be a useful method of concentrating and producing ideas. Fears, fantasies and longings may be mixed up with sense experiences. All these can be talked about, but not for too long if written expression is expected as the drive towards expression can spend itself in talk.

Once pupils are able to do their own writing for themselves they can continue with it as long as it is absorbing. At first this will be for about fifteen minutes but it may be far longer. Many children need time before they begin to write in order to think and to arrange their ideas.

A loose-leaf book is better than an exercise book for this sort of work. Something the child considers less than satisfactory can easily be taken out without injury to the rest. A fair copy can be made and inserted. of some piece that is specially liked. Pictures can be included and the cover painted or decorated if the child wants to do this. Creative expression creates its own order - though this is not always apparent, especially in the early stages - because if it matters to the one who is concerned in it then it has to be as good as it possibly can be.

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Pencil is preferable, even for an older child, unless there is no difficulty in writing quickly with a pen. Usually a pen cannot keep pace with the flow of ideas. A good biro would not be out of place here.

In Form II, when a fair copy is needed, as far as possible correcting should be done by the pupil. The work is re-read carefully with an eye to spelling and punctuation, the child asking advice when in doubt and using dictionary and rubber to produce a more accurate and finished product.

5. Literature

Stories

Literature books (Tales book in Form I) are read, not studied. In Form I and where necessary in Form II they are read aloud by the parent or teacher. The best way of getting to know a book is to read it or hear it read with complete attention. If this is done the pupil is bound to think about it and turn over in his mind the actions of the characters and their personalities, that is he will be studying it though he will not realise this.

Because books are read aloud throughout Form I and, where necessary in Form II, it is possible to choose books that might be considered more suitable for older children. This is done deliberately for the purpose of widening the child's mental horizon and enriching the imagination.

Myths and legends, beginning with the fairy tales in IB, are a part of the literature all through the School. They are chosen because they have helped to form the cultural heritage of Europe and are good stories in their own right.

Poetry

'Teaching poetry' is really not the right phrase to use. The child does not need to understand every word and nothing is more likely to spoil a poem than having it too well explained and being asked questions about every detail.

Although pupils in these forms may like and enjoy nonsense rhymes and poems on subjects suitable for their age they can often appreciate poems which might be considered 'too old' for them, provided they are able to enjoy the sound and the general meaning. Of course it is better if the poem is completely understood and the new words can become part of the child's growing vocabulary. As in narration lessons, the essential new and difficult words

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can be introduced before the reading. Afterwards there should be an opportunity for the child to ask questions.

The anthologies set and recommended for each class will form the basis of the year's poetry lessons but there is no need to stick rigidly to them.

Plays

One Shakespeare play per term is set in Form II. Many pupils at this stage can read and enjoy these plays and where there are several children in a family, sections of the play may be acted in an informal way.

Shakespeare's plays are bound to be the most difficult of the literature books and it is unlikely that a child of this age will understand every word that is read. This need not matter as long as the story can be followed and the reading is enjoyed. After the play has been read and the story has been talked about and understood, suitable sections can be chosen for acting. Improvised costumes and scenery will help to bring a scene to life.

If it is felt that a child is not yet ready for the play set it can be omitted and more time given to the other books.

6. Leisure reading

This is reading done for relaxation - no narration will be expected - and the books may be less demanding than those chosen for literature. This is not to say that they should be second-rate; whether they bring fantasy, adventure or humour into a child's life they should be good of their kind.

In Form I most leisure reading books will be read aloud like the text-books and there is no need for this to cease in IIB if a child is still not really fluent in reading.

It is good for children to own some leisure reading books but if they have access to a good library they should be encouraged to use it as soon as possible and take care of the borrowed books, remembering that other children will need them too.

MATHEMATICS

For IB work see the Programme.

Mathematics for Forms I and II

A child's attitude to mathematics should be a positive one in that he should be prepared to use the mathematics he learns and to encourage this the teacher must develop strategies to enable children to learn both concepts and techniques.

With this in mind, precision, accuracy and competence in manipulating numbers must be practised. Problem situations should be related to the child's own experience and environment and should be of sufficient interest themselves to stimulate the creative faculty. Discovery is a natural part of mathematical activity and is inherent in the solution of mathematical problems and this requires a certain amount of practical work.

A parent who is teaching his child will find that by working through the ALPHA or BETA Mathematics books, all these three aspects of mathematics will be developed.

Unless a child appears to have a marked aptitude for this subject, work should begin in Lower IA with Book 1 of Beta Mathematics. Then when the pupil comes up to Upper IA a switch should be made to the Alpha series unless it is clear that this would be too demanding because the child has been having considerable difficulty with the work in Beta 1.

Usually it will be possible for the pupil to remain in the Alpha series and, having completed Alpha 4 by the end of IIA, he will be ready to begin the scheme of work set for the senior classes.

Pupils who have found it necessary to stay with the Beta series should, if possible, do some work from Beta 5 when Beta 4 has been completed. This will help to prepare for the senior work.

By the end of the primary course the child should have mastered as an essential minimum the following topics:-

1. Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division for numbers up to two digits.
2. The use of money in daily life - in effect, number work to two decimal places, but handled mentally as pounds and pence.

3. All common aspects of time and date, timetables and the twenty-four hour clock.
4. Familiarity with the use of metric units and such imperial measures as continued to be met.
5. Meaning of percentages and averages.
6. Understanding simple statistical graphs as used, for example, by newspapers.
7. Rough estimates of sizes, distances and costs and rounding-off measurements.
8. Using graduated scales.

The above is a bare minimum and most children will cover very much more ground than this.

Let's Discover Mathematics

This series is used as supplementary material. In IA the books should be available for the use of pupils as it is almost certain that some of the topics are going to be found interesting and useful. In IIB the book need only be obtained if the pupil has used the series in Form I and wants to go on using it.

From Lower IA onwards these are books for the pupil to use as he wishes. He will ask advice where necessary but, on the whole, it is expected that he will, if he has a flair for Mathematics, make the book his own and pick out those sections that most interest him.

There is no need for these books to be worked through systematically. A pupil who wants to use them should have a separate note-book for any written work concerned with - a book that is very much his own and which he corrects for himself, having access to the relevant answer book.

Any pupil who has finished the book set for his form and wants to go on to the next should do so.

A pupil who finds the ideas bewildering and would obviously prefer to restrict his Mathematics work to that done from the Alpha or Beta book should not be pressed to continue with Let's Discover. It should simply be left where he can return to it if he wants to because later he may find himself ready for the kind of thinking involved.

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HISTORY

History teaching often suffers from a lack of thought about what its purpose is. A child does not possess a sense of time reaching from the past to the present nor can he appreciate historical influences until he is older. Yet there is a need to realise that the past is important and to interpret it in a way which is meaningful to a young mind.

It has been accepted that stories from the past - our version of tales passed down orally through generations - are essential for young people. The narration of these stories can be followed up by drawing, painting and model-making and linked with the Art and Craft lessons. If there are several children on hand it will probably be unnecessary to suggest that they act some of the stories. If their imagination has been caught nothing will prevent them. A child with dramatic flair who is learning alone will sometimes like to make puppets and act through them.

GEOGRAPHY

In his early years, the child should acquire a simple knowledge of how people live around him and in other lands. It will involve learning elementary facts about the appearance of different countries and their flora and fauna as well as a realisation of the difference between peoples and places. Interest in a world which is so different and yet so closely linked should be aroused.

Whenever possible topics should be approached in a practical way and as many as possible of the activities suggested in the set books should be attempted.

IB

About Animals

At this stage the book is really of secondary importance. The main thing is to encourage the child to look around him and see how the landscape affects people's lives. Any activity that helps to do this is useful, hence the importance of outdoor Geography. The book, when used, should be read aloud by the parent or teacher; do not forget the pictures, as much can be learnt from these. The 'for you to try' sections should be treated as oral exercises; it is unreasonable to expect a child of this age to deal with them in any other way. Any parts of the book which are too difficult can be omitted.

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Lower IA

The Young Geographer 1

This book should be adapted by the parent to make the work immediately relevant to the pupil. For example, if the road signs given differ from those in the child's environment the local signs should be substituted and, in the chapter on the seasons, the local seasons should be studied, though the British ones can be considered too for the sake of interest and perhaps contrast.

Outdoor Geography must not be neglected. The pictures in the book are very useful and the indoor activities very valuable but when doing work from Chapter 4 (Around the School) a study of the child's own neighbourhood and a model of this will be more likely to bring the topic to life.

Upper IA

The Young Geographer 2

Book 2 takes the ideas of Book 1 and develops them further. Again, though it will be useful to study the plan of Hollinford Junior School, it will be advisable to spend more time on making a plan of the child's own house or school and the room where the lessons are done. You may find that your pupil has not developed to the point where he understands a plan.

When the topic concerns finding direction, the pupil should have the use of a compass. If possible he should have one of his own and one that will not come to pieces if it gets some hard usage.

An atlas will be useful at this stage so that the general position of the countries mentioned can be discovered. Atlas games can also be played in leisure time.

IIB

The Young Geographer 3

This book starts with a general introduction on the importance and use of maps. It is recommended that the child should become familiar with his atlas and how to use it; quite a lot of time should be devoted to this, in conjunction with Part I of the book. The chapters in Part 3 need not all be studied in great detail. If any product is of particular relevance time should be devoted to studying it.

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thoroughly; e.g. if one of the products is grown in your area a special project could be worthwhile.

IIA

The Young Geographer 4

As with IIB an atlas and Ordnance Survey maps (of local areas if available) should be used to supplement Part I. Quite a large part of the book deals with the Geography of the British Isles; this should be studied by all pupils, but those living abroad should make comparisons with their present environment, e.g. industries, agriculture, etc.

Outdoor Geography

This is important right from the beginning and will form the basis of more advanced fieldwork in higher forms. Essentially the child is being taught to observe his environment and, as soon as he is able, to follow maps. There is a particular opportunity here for overseas pupils to discover how life in that area differs either from life at home or from what they have read about in class. Fieldwork can often be linked with the study of local history and with scientific investigation into air and water and animal life of the district.

Suggested topics for outdoor Geography:

- how local people make a living
- why bridges, roads, towns or villages are situated where they are
- studying local soils and rocks and landforms
- the yearly weather pattern
- local farming
- local industries
- transport in the area
- types of houses in the area.

SCIENCE

The main aim of Science work at the Primary Stage is to enable children to acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of their environment. The introductory section of this Handbook has dealt with the stages of development

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through which children pass and we may relate these to science by a stress on the joy of discovery for oneself, on trying, by practical investigation, to find answers to problems arising from their own experience. Most children will be at a stage at which their thinking relates to what they can see and know and will not have the ability to cope with abstract ideas.

The work for Forms I and II is taken from the Schools Council Project, Science 5-13. It consists of Units intended to help parents and teachers to direct the child's attention to suitable problems and to suggest ideas for solving them. Children will thus be able to work at their own pace and level and the teaching material matched to personal ability and interest. The teacher should discuss with the pupil each item of work as it progresses in order to determine the degree of understanding and the pupil's mode of thought.

The parent or teacher should select from each Science 5-13 Unit on the above basis of suitability in relation to the stage reached by the child. Science studies are no longer treated in isolation and overlap with several other subjects. Work in science should include visits, related art work and background reading.

The Units allocated to the different school years have been carefully selected so that the new parent/teacher has a wide choice of suitable material. The pupil is expected to work at some aspect of well over half the material allocated for each year, and possibly, to go back to some of the material left out at an earlier stage should sufficient progress be made in later years.

The work on any topic will usually consist of a practical investigation, including observation, experiment, measuring and discussion between teacher and pupil. This will be followed by recording work which may take the form of a verbal report, for a very young child, or a written account, including drawings. Models, paintings and graphs can be included where they are appropriate.

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Details of an alternative series of texts are given in the yearly Programme. This series includes exercises for the pupil to carry out at the end of each section.

Sex Education

Sex education is a poor title for an essential field of knowledge. Parents are the best teachers and modern parents will usually try to answer questions about bodies and babies naturally without evasion. Quite as important as the factual background, is the absorption of healthy and sensible attitudes to bodily functions and reproduction. Again a family atmosphere is the best environment to ensure this, but time could be found in religious education to talk about these things and the moral values implicit in personal relationships.

Parents will be answering a child's questions from his early years, but time should be devoted to systematic instruction at about 10, before the onset of puberty with its unsettled attitudes and emotional strains.

Nature Study

The Nature Walk and Nature Diary are essential and traditional parts of PNEU education. A 'seeing eye' can be trained from the earliest age. Recognition is important and, as far as possible, names should be learned. Plants, stones, birds, insects, stars, clouds, water and life in water are amongst the things to be observed.

There should be at least one Nature Walk each week. It is the child's chance to look at things, not the parent's or teacher's opportunity to instruct and it is sufficient to answer the child's questions. A magnifying glass is a helpful aid. Children living in towns should not be deprived of a walk for there is an active natural life in parks and tree-lined streets and birds abound. Country visits should also be made.

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The Nature Diary results from these outings. Children keep a dated record of what they see. It should be the child's own book without correction or addition. Drawings and paintings are an essential part of the Diary but not specimens. Sparing use of specimens may be made for the Nature Table. If the child is too young to write, the Diary can be dictated, but it should be what the child wants to say. If reference books for the local flora and fauna are available, the child should learn to use them so long as they are not too advanced or expensive. It is to be hoped that nature study will not only prove to be an important basis for scientific study but will continue into adult life. Fieldwork in other subjects like geography is an essential development from it.

FRENCH

The aim in studying French is to achieve fluency in speaking and reading and, eventually, in writing it and this will only result from thorough learning of the basic grammar and vocabulary. At the same time, however, conversation and singing can and should be introduced from the early stages even though they involve the use of words and forms which have not been studied.

It is very important that children who are learning French hear it correctly spoken from the start so that their pronunciation will be as perfect as possible. It is difficult to correct imperfections of accent once they have been acquired. For this reason parents who feel doubtful about their own pronunciation should make use of the audio-lingual course recommended - if a record player is available. (Unfortunately no comparable course for this age group is available on tape or cassette).

The alternative course which makes use of text-books is only to be used if parents are confident that their pronunciation is accurate and, therefore, they feel records are unnecessary.

Audio-lingual Course

'Bon Voyage' is a three year course designed for children aged 8-11 years. The records are accompanied by scripts which contain the dialogue spoken on the records, together with songs, music and rhymes. Scripts are well illustrated and some are intended for use as work-sheets.

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Parents who are not fluent French speakers are recommended to use this course. It covers three years:

Upper IA	-	year 1
IIB	-	year 2
IIA	-	year 3

In the third year parents may choose one of the books set and use it with the records as supplementary work.

Alternative Course

Lower & Upper IA

If parents have a sound knowledge of French, and if the pupil is already able to read English fluently, the recommended books, 'La Ferme' and 'Le Petit Train Rouge', may be used.

Parents are free to use the books in any way but most work should be oral and consist of simple conversations, songs and games. Children can soon learn greetings and follow simple instructions such as, "Montre-moi la porte", "Dessine une pomme rouge" etc. Many games involving counting and simple phrases can be played in French and later little scenes (such as 'à la gare' or 'aux magasins') can be acted out. Children may enjoy learning to tell the time in French from a cardboard clock or doing simple mental arithmetic in the language.

After some time the pupil can begin to learn the written form of the words he knows orally and flash cards with pictures and words can often help to encourage recognition. It is not advisable to introduce formal grammar at this stage but it will be necessary to explain, from time to time, points such as the different forms of adjectives and articles in the masculine and feminine, singular and plural, and how the verb changes according to the 'person'.

IIB

In this class work should still be chiefly oral and include French conversation etc. as in Form IA.

The books, 'Mon Premier Livre' and 'Paul et Jacqueline' may be made use of throughout the year.

Direct translation is not used with younger pupils as it is better for them to be encouraged to think and work entirely in French during the lessons. Pupils can, however, begin a French-English vocabulary list in a small note-book

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at this stage and they should be careful to make a note of the gender of the nouns as they go along by putting the relevant form of the definite article with each word.

IIA

More formal study of the language begins in this form but parents will notice that only a small amount of work is set for study each term. Pupils of this age are still young for formal language study and parents who decide to use different books from those on the programme should remember this and not be too demanding in their expectations of the child's progress.

LATIN

IIA

Pupils who intend to take the Common Entrance Examination may require some knowledge of Latin but we do not recommend that other pupils begin studying it, unless they are particularly able.

PICTURE STUDY

This subject is one which most children can enjoy and benefit from if they are given the proper guidance. The PNEU books of reproductions give children an excellent opportunity to become familiar with great artists and pictures. The work of many artists is studied since a different one is chosen each term and in selecting the pictures an effort is made to show as many aspects of the painter's work as possible.

Parents who are not very familiar with Art need not feel daunted by the idea of teaching Picture Study; teacher and pupil can learn together very successfully in this subject, and the parents will have the notes in the PNEU journals and the information in the various books of reproductions to help them.

Various kinds of background information will make the lessons more enjoyable, more interesting and more profitable. The parent should see that the youngest children have the basic general knowledge necessary for tackling the work. For example, if a child has spent most of his life in a rural environment overseas much may have to be explained before and during the early lessons in Picture Study.

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The child must know the meaning of the words which will be used in lessons. Explaining that pictures are not only to be found hanging in homes and schools but that some by famous artists are also to be seen in art galleries, museums and churches would ensure that a child knows what galleries and museums are, and, if the artist for the term is one of the earlier painters, understands why so many of the earlier European paintings have religious themes.

Children will enjoy getting to know famous pictures and, later on, going to see them in art galleries. When they visit a gallery they may also have the fun of spotting other pictures by artists they have studied as some artists have a very recognisable style of painting. They can enjoy the form and colour in the pictures as well as learning a lot from the subjects depicted. They will, for instance, find out what famous people and places looked like. The painter had in the past to do much of the work now done by the photographer.

Suggestions on how to take the lesson

1. Open the folder at the picture and let the child talk about it and pick out details which he has noticed for a few minutes.
2. Let the child have a perfectly quiet two or three minutes looking at the picture so well and carefully that he will have a clear mental picture of it, noticing the colours and general pattern and shape. He might look at the picture, close his eyes, then look again and compare the mental picture he made with the one before him.
3. Close the folder and ask the child to describe the picture as fully as possible.
4. Then have a general talk about the picture and what is happening in it and, if appropriate, a talk about the artist himself, his life and country and the people he knew. The Journal notes are helpful here.
5. When more than one child is being taught they can narrate to each other as this may help each child to visualise the picture better.

The children will come to realise that good pictures can be looked at again and again and will prove increasingly rewarding. The pictures will provide talking points, giving excellent opportunities of widening children's vocabularies and interests and increasing their general knowledge.

ART AND CRAFT

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It is natural for a child to draw from the earliest age. Before he is four he will delight in making brightly coloured pictures with crayons, paint and felt-tip pens. It inhibits a child not to let him give free rein to his natural artistic tendencies and parents should make adequate provision and give every encouragement to a child's wish to draw, paint, build and create.

It is important to realise that children's art is not a series of crude scribbles and daubs, but an integral part of learning activity as important as verbal expression. Children pass through stages - the 'scribbling', the 'patch-painting' and emerge into a 'symbol' stage, but differ widely at the age at which they pass through each stage.

We have already stressed in the first section of this book the value of an atmosphere and environment which provide experiences suitable for children. The teacher will provide opportunities for play and for arousing the child's interest. Paints and paper (and an easel), crayons, pencils and felt-tip pens, a display table and a piece of pinboard about 3' x 4' are essential.

Aims and Processes

Art is a creative process for children of all ages. It develops visual perception - a sensitive awareness of space, colour, texture and sensory experience, and is also a means of expressing and communicating personal imagery or creativity. In this sense it is inadvisable to "teach" art although certain techniques and skills must be taught in order to facilitate personal expression.

If a parent provides the materials for the child to use spontaneously, no verbal teaching is necessary. However, the child may want to talk about his ideas and work after he has completed it. The teacher's prime function is thus to provide the stimulus, the atmosphere and the materials.

Practical Advice

A suitable working area is important to remove worry about spilt paint or water. Other requirements are an over-all (an old shirt or apron will do), a work top (an old table in a garage or spare room), some arrangement for keeping materials (boxes, a tray, jars or tins for brushes,

larger ones are safer), a cloth for mopping up, plenty of paper (sugar paper in different colours is best), suitable material for collages (e.g. wallpaper pattern books, colour supplements). Scrap materials like fabric, string, metal etc. should be kept in a bag along with beads, buttons, wooden articles etc.

For modelling, carving and construction a small workbench is helpful with simple tools like pliers and rasps. Adhesive will be needed. Work should be out of doors whenever weather permits.

Visual Education

To supplement and develop artistic observation, the use of a unique series of books on visual appreciation is recommended as an optional study. Details are given in the Programmes.

MUSIC

The main thing to remember here is that music should be a joy. A child should never be coerced into music-reading, playing a musical instrument or singing.

Music Appreciation

In Lower IA and upwards listening to the work of a different composer each term will be part of the curriculum. If a record-player is available and music is part of the home background.

In many ways Music Appreciation is very like Picture Study, introducing the works - when and how they were written - and talking about the composer's life are approached in the same way as the background knowledge on the artist and his pictures.

Singing

This is the easiest branch of the subject in that it calls for no special equipment. There are records of suitable songs and singing games for the younger children but most parents already have a store of songs they can pass on to their children. If this is the only aspect of music that can be developed there is no need to feel a child is poorly provided for. Singing, like storytelling, is one of the basic art forms and the child who has inherited a rich

variety of songs has a great possession.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This will be adapted to suit local conditions and should be approached with naturalness; for example, in a place where riding a horse is usual children should learn to do it as soon as they can, but if they live somewhere where it is a luxury pursuit it would be far better for them to learn to ride a bicycle.

Expensive ways of taking exercise are unnecessary when there is walking, running, scrambling and climbing, and, above all, swimming.

To be able to swim is so worthwhile that it should be the first consideration when parents are planning the Physical Education section of their children's time-table. Allied to it is instruction in road safety.

Diet is nowadays recognised to be of great importance to a child's development. Understanding of food values should be part of education and a child should, through his scientific knowledge, realise that physical and mental capacity are related to eating and drinking.

ASSESSMENT

1. A system of continuous assessment is an essential part of the PNEU Home Education Division. Its purpose for the pupil is to give him an opportunity to show what he has learnt and what progress has been made. The extent of progress in the syllabus contained in the PNEU programmes will be recorded by the teacher on the Assessment Form (R5) which also contains a section for comments on special features such as specific education difficulties or achievements. One of the uses of assessment over a period is for diagnostic purposes and the teacher will refer to earlier entries in order to bring to our attention any particular points which require explanation. Specimens of current work will accompany the form as specified below. Personal development will also be recorded.
2. The system also provides for self-assessment by the parent/teacher. We have thus incorporated a form of 'in-service training'. It is as important to help the teacher as the pupil since it will lead to the avoidance

of unsatisfactory techniques and attitudes and to greater confidence. The teacher is asked to give frank comments on her performance, to comment on programmes and books used and to set out in full topics on which advice is sought.

3. The Assessment Form will be studied by your tutor and possibly by one of the expert subject advisers appointed by PNEU. They will write their comments on teacher and pupil and reply to queries and requests for advice on Form R6 which will then be returned to the teacher, a duplicate copy being retained by the tutor for future reference.
4. The assessment progress should take place towards the end of each term, but if in the teacher's judgment, satisfactory progress is being maintained, the second term's return may be omitted. Teachers may, as at present, write for advice on any problem they encounter.
5. It must be stressed that the assessment process should be as intellectually rigorous as an examination. Specimens of work will be sent which illustrate the pupil's normal performance and which have been marked or commented on by the teacher in the usual manner. Comments on progress should be as objective as possible. Specimens of work should illustrate the pupil's standards, e.g. examples of poor spelling or poor mathematics, or, on the other hand, examples of high-quality work. Because it is virtually impossible to measure the effectiveness of narration at a distance, it is not a heading in the pupil's report. Reference should be made however to any difficulties encountered by the pupil or teacher over narration.
6. The same high standards of analysis should apply to the teacher's assessment of her performance. It is a unique opportunity to sit back and think about how the term has gone. The mere fact of writing down comments about teaching will in itself be beneficial. The tutor's comments will then be a further stimulus.

PART A

PUPIL'S PROGRESS

1. Comments

(a) During the last week of term, the teacher will prepare in duplicate the Assessment Form (R5) and retain one copy. Comments on each subject should be made in the light of the term's work carried out by the pupil. The teacher should complete the form with the pupil's work books available for perusal. Comments on oral work, where appropriate, e.g. fluency in narration, must be included.

(b) English with 5s to 8s. Comments must include reference to progress in any reading scheme which is being used. If a child has progressed beyond graded reading books, the level of attainment must be given.

(c) Mathematics with 5s to 8s. Comments must include reference to progress in the scheme of work in the PNEU Programme.

2. Specimens of Work

(a) Specimens must be on sheets of paper, even if the work has to be copied from exercise books.

(b) The pupil's name must be clearly written on each piece of work and the work dated.

(c) Specimens will be returned if requested along with the tutor's comments on Form R6.

(d) Ages 5 to 8 Specimens required:

English

Writing: (i) A sample sentence or sentences copied from a model.
or A short narration taken down by the teacher.

(ii) Original writing when the pupil becomes capable of it.

Mathematics

The last full page of written work must be submitted, or a copy. Other work illustrative of standards may also be sent.

Art

One painting (optional)

(e) Ages 9 and over. Specimens required:

English

- (i) An example of the pupil's original work.
- (ii) A sample of handwriting.

Mathematics

5 different examples of unaided work to indicate the stage reached.

Other Subjects One recent example of unaided work to indicate the stage reached.

3. Other Comments

Comments on the development of the pupil and any relevant comments on personality, willingness to work and general capacity should be given under the heading 'Other Comments'.

PART B

TEACHING ASSESSMENT

1. The teacher should set out the degree of success achieved to date in teaching, any set-backs or inadequacies, where methods have succeeded or failed, whether teacher-pupil relationships in the schoolroom are satisfactory, comments on classroom organisation, whether lesson preparation entails special difficulty, whether material for teaching is adequate etc.
2. Under the second heading, comments on the suitability of programme syllabuses, on the books available to the pupil and on the supply of books and materials should be made.
3. Under the third heading, specific requests for help and advice should be given. These need not be limited to the space available on the form.

PART C

TUTOR'S COMMENTS

1. The Assessment Form (R6)

Tutors or Advisers will write their comments in each section:

A. For the pupil: B. For the teacher. Both general and particular aspects of performance will be singled out for mention.

2. A copy will be retained for record.

3. The two sets of comments may be separated by dividing the Form along the dotted lines, so that the pupil may be shown the tutor's remarks without the teacher disclosing the second set of comments.

THE PNEU LIBRARY

The PNEU library service is available, free of charge, for members, at home or overseas, who wish to use it. An initial deposit of at least £3.00 must be sent for postage.

The Catalogue, of over 4,000 books, has a key which gives some indication of the age for which each book is suitable. The Librarian is willing to choose the books if the age and tastes of the child are given.

A parcel weighing up to 4-lb. is normally made up either when a list of requests is received or when the choice is left to the Librarian, and despatched monthly. The number of books in these parcels varies between two and five.

Members are requested to return books as soon as they have been read and in any case may not retain them for more than a month.

Further particulars may be obtained from the Librarian at PNEU headquarters in London.

